

Appl. No. 09/992,345
Attorney Docket No.: 10240/2
Amdt. dated March 29, 2006
Reply to Restriction Requirement of December 29, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Amendment to the Specification

Applicants hereby respectfully request insertion into the current application of a statement that the current application claims benefit to provisional U.S. Patent Application No. 60/251488, filed December 5, 2000. This paragraph is to be incorporated into the specification below the title and prior to the "Background of the Invention" subtitle.

No new matter has been introduced into the disclosure of the application.

The claim to priority of provisional U.S. Patent Application No. 60/251448 was properly made under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) at the time of filing the current application, as is evidenced in the file wrapper by the Utility Patent Application Transmittal form filed by Applicants dated November 13, 2001. The proper claim to priority has additionally been confirmed by the USPTO as is evidenced by the filing receipt mailed to Applicants by the USPTO on December 10, 2001.

Entry of the priority claim statement is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-50 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 14-20 and 39-48 have been previously withdrawn.

Applicants note with appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter at section 24, page 7 of the Action.

At section 4, page 2 of the Action, claims 1-8, 21-28, 38, 49 and 50 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,611,727 to Bickley et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,167,382 to Sparks et al.

Further, at section 17, page 5 of the Action, claims 34-37 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,611,727 to Bickley et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,167,382 to Sparks et al and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,415,196 to Crampton et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse both § 103 rejections.

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Bickley is the primary reference in both rejections. However, Bickley cannot be applied as prior art against the claims of the present application. The earliest claimed filing date of Bickley is March 5, 2001. As described above, the earliest claimed filing date of the current application is December 5, 2000. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103, Bickley is not prior art with respect to the current application.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the §103 rejections.

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 29, 2006



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